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New Monitoring Better Predicts Flood Levels For River Residents and Owners



Areas throughout the District can rise over 20 feet within a 24-hour time period.

Live Oak, FL, November 1, 2016 – Residents and owners of river property in the area will be better able to respond to flood water concerns with updated river level monitoring tools being implemented in the Suwannee River Management District (District).

An updated set of measurements for river level monitoring went live in the District this week which will provide more accurate reporting based on updated geodetic, or land surveying, information. As of November 1, 2016, the updated measurements will be based on the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88). Currently, only one other water management district in Florida has completed the NAVD 88 update thus far.

The set of measurements used to reflect river levels are based on a common vertical datum - a datum being a reference by which things are either mapped horizontally or measured vertically. A vertical datum provides a base starting point to measure elevation within a monitoring

network, such as the District's river level stations. Historically, river levels in the area (and elsewhere) have been measured using the National Geodetic Vertical Datum 1929 (NGVD 29).

"Flood protection for river residents is part of our primary mission at the District," said Noah Valenstein, executive director of the Suwannee River Water Management District. "In times of possible flooding, our reporting is often the main source of information river residents and property owners rely on to prepare for potential flood damage. This update will allow us to better serve our customers."

Improved technologies, updated leveling, surveying and greater knowledge of terrain called for updated measurements. Throughout the District, NAVD 88 vertical datum will result in a 0.64 to 0.90 foot numerical reduction in the values used to show river levels. The actual level of the river remains the same.

"Rivers in the district are notorious for rapidly changing flood stages," said Tom Mirti, director of the Division of Water Resources with the Suwannee River Water Management District. "Many times, a fraction of an inch can be enough to determine whether property is damaged or spared. Accuracy and dependability of river levels and flood forecasting is vital."

NAVD 88 was released in partnership with the District, Florida Division of Emergency Management, National Weather Service and United States Geological Survey.

For more information on the new vertical datum, visit. <http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com>, keyword "vertical datum." To learn more about the District, follow us on Facebook and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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